

Chapter 1

Explaining EFT

In This Chapter

- ▶ Becoming acquainted with EFT
 - ▶ Knowing what EFT can help with
 - ▶ Deciding whether to seek help
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Emotion Freedom Technique (or EFT as it is referred to in this book) is a simple healing technique that you can use by yourself or with a therapist/practitioner. You can combine it effectively with some other therapies, or use it as a standalone technique. In this chapter, you discover how EFT evolved, how it works, and how you can benefit from using it on yourself and others. You also find out a small sample of the problems EFT can help with and, if using EFT on yourself, when you may want to find outside help from a therapist.

Meeting the EFT Family

Although you may not have heard of EFT, you may well be familiar with the therapies of acupuncture, acupressure, shiatsu, and kinesiology. All are part of the energy therapies family tree, shown in Figure 1-1. Broadly speaking, energy therapies are techniques that work on rebalancing the flow of energy that gets disrupted as it travels through channels in your body known as *meridians*. This bit is important to maintaining good emotional and physical health, and I talk more about this later in this chapter. There's also a bit of psychology thrown in here, which is why you also hear people referring to EFT as an energy therapy, energy psychology, or meridian therapy. I explain the most popular of the other energy therapies – and you can use them with EFT – in Chapter 18.

EFT is what you may call a modern-day version of these energy therapies, some of which go back more than 2,500 years. Other theorists say that EFT taps into a part of the brain that stores and processes information, used in neuro-physiology. No one exactly knows but, after all, do you need to know exactly how something works if it's doing you no harm, only good? Because many people use EFT to great effect, the best advice is to continue to use it until scientists come up with their own theory.

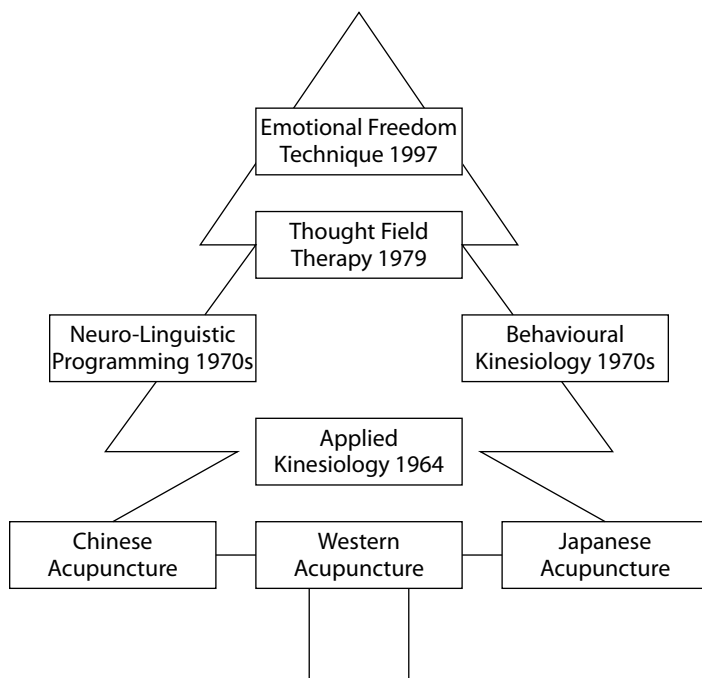


Figure 1-1:
The energy
therapies
family tree.

Discovering EFT in Action

Every day you encounter a multitude of experiences. You store specific experiences as memories into a filing cabinet in your brain, but because your brain can't store every single memory, it deletes what's irrelevant and stores the most important. With the memory, your brain stores any emotion that goes with it. Next time you need to remember a name or location, for instance, your brain searches around the filing cabinet and brings some or all the information back, together with any emotion. When you see someone you love your brain accesses that information and brings with it good feelings. What information your brain can't find readily it makes up as best it can, which is why you sometimes get names mixed up, for instance.

Alphabet soup: EFT and TFT

EFT's roots are in Thought Field Therapy (TFT), which was discovered by Dr Roger Callahan, a cognitive psychologist and hypnotherapist who specialised in phobias. In the 1980s, Dr Callahan had been studying the Chinese meridians and their effect on emotions when you tap on certain meridians. A patient, Mary, came to see him. Mary had an intense phobia of water and, up to that time, Dr Callahan hadn't had much luck in curing her with his conventional therapies. During this particular session, however, Mary complained of feeling sick in her stomach at the mere thought of being near water, and Dr Callahan asked her to think about her phobia while tapping several times under her eye, which is the stomach meridian. After several minutes of tapping, to Dr Callahan's amazement, Mary suddenly jumped up and announced that her phobia had gone. She went over to Dr Callahan's

pool (this was, of course, California), feeling no anxiety or sickness in her stomach, and even splashed water on her face.

Apart from the fact that her phobia disappeared so quickly, what was also interesting about this experiment was that, although Mary's phobia to water had disappeared, she said she had no intention of jumping into the pool because she couldn't swim.

Gary Craig, a Stanford engineer and ordained minister, trained with Dr Callahan in TFT and applied this method to his clients. Over the years, he simplified the method and found that it wasn't necessary to tap in sequence or on so many meridians. Others tried also to adapt the method but it was Gary's that was the simplest and most effective of all, and so Emotional Freedom Technique was born in the early 1990s.



Whether it's to protect you from future life-threatening events is unclear, but unfortunately bad or negative memories are easier to remember and recall than good or positive memories.

The cause of all negative emotions is a disruption in the body's energy system. In EFT this statement is known as the *discovery statement*. It was once thought that bad memories caused negative emotions, but we now know that the disruption in your body's energy system actually causes the negative emotions and responses. This disruption causes a blockage in your energy system, and can be triggered again either consciously or unconsciously. For example, say you were locked in a cleaning cupboard as a very small child and you were scared. Whether you remember the incident or not, as an adult you may not like being in dark places, a small room or even the smell of certain cleaning materials.

Each time something triggers a negative memory, your brain also brings with it the negative emotion such as fear, anger, or hurt. These bad memories send an alert message to your brain and at the same time create a negative emotion. Because these type of messages to your brain are like electrical impulses, they act like a bolt of lightning that short-circuits your body's

energy system, causing a blockage or an imbalance. It's this disruption that causes emotional and physical problems. You can find out more on emotions and the brain in Chapter 2.

Unless you release these blockages, they can remain locked in your body's energy system for years or even a lifetime and are only evident when you start suffering from symptoms such as anger, fear, low self-esteem, addiction, and anxiety, for example. This endless re-triggering reinforces the belief that you can't remove the problem, which is why you often hear someone say 'I've always had this fear', or 'I can't change the way I feel (or behave); it's the way I am'.

What causes this energy disruption in some people and not in others depends upon:

- ✓ The way you were brought up or conditioned to respond to negative events.
- ✓ If you were affected by a psychological or emotional trauma.
- ✓ A birth defect.
- ✓ An emotional incident whether past or present.
- ✓ Possibly *geopathic stress* – a name given to natural or man-made energies emanating from the earth which are detrimental to our health.



Memories can also be triggered by any or all of your senses – sight, smell, touch, taste, sound – reactivating the energy disruption and resulting negative emotion.

Table 1-1 demonstrates how a person's energy system is disrupted on seeing a spider they believe will harm them. Notice how the negative disruption affects thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. The negative thought or memory triggers a disruption in the body's energy system, experienced as psychological, physical, or emotional pain.

Table 1-1 Disruption in the Body's Energy System	
Thought	Spiders are deadly; they're dangerous; must send message to brain
Emotion	Fear
Physical feeling	Paralysis, heart racing, sweaty palms
Behaviour	Run, hit out, cower

Travelling the meridian highway

Physicists have changed people's understanding of energy by proposing that all 'solid' objects, including your body, are made up of energy. You know this because doctors can measure them when you have an electroencephalography (EEG) or a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan. This energy that flows through your body can't be seen by the naked eye but if you were able to picture your body as a three-dimensional roadmap, you'd see a whole network of invisible pathways interconnecting with each other, acting like electrical circuits. These electrical circuits are known as meridians and they connect to the tissues,

organs, and every atom, cell, bone, and tendon in your body. The meridians interact with each other and transmit information faster than the speed of light, sending signals to alter body temperature or to regulate emotion, and also to signal you when you need to release water, for instance. Chinese medicine refers to this as a life-force called 'chi' (pronounced 'chee').

As long as you're in pretty good emotional health, these meridians maintain a constant balance and flow.

The figure shows you what the meridian highway looks like.

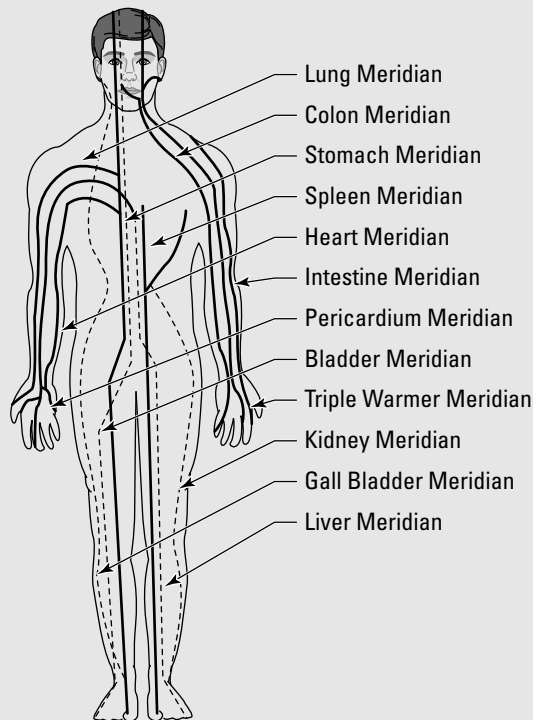


Table 1-2 shows some further examples of how you can react to an memory or emotion that has been triggered.

Table 1-2	Reaction to a Trigger
<i>Area Affected</i>	<i>Results in . . .</i>
Emotion	Anger, shame, jealousy, fear
Behaviour	Hitting the bottle, hitting someone, running away
Physiology	Heart racing, sweating, feeling agitated
Belief	Can't achieve, mustn't do, not good enough

Soothing the negative

During an EFT session you're tapping on various meridian points around your body while concentrating on the problem. This sends vibrations along your energy path, and these vibrations get to work by unblocking, or in other words, *rebalancing* the energy system. This process removes the excess or irrational reaction but leaves the rational and normal reaction. If all this sounds like magic, it is.

Now before I get carried away, I must say that EFT isn't a universal remedy for everything and it can't claim to cure every ailment known to man or woman for that matter – nor can it give you longer eyelashes or whiter teeth. However, it's a therapy that has the potential to develop into a revolutionary new way of healing. With EFT, the philosophy is to try it on everything and see.

Practising EFT

You can apply EFT on anyone. Anyone? Well, yes actually. As long as you have a modicum of common sense, there's no reason why not. EFT enhances any other healing or self-help modality, whether it be counselling, hypnotherapy, reiki, reflexology, neurolinguistic programming, cognitive behaviour therapy, play therapy, and many more therapies besides.



Many ideas throughout this book enhance your techniques with EFT but here are three helpful tips you may like to remember before you begin:

- ✓ **Openness:** I can appreciate that you may still be a little sceptical even up to this point and, I have to admit, I was the same when I first heard about EFT. I had to see it work with my own eyes before I could truly believe. If you can leave your scepticism to one side while reading this book and carrying out the exercises, I'd greatly appreciate it. If you're willing to do this, I can promise you an amazing experience. Although you don't have to believe in EFT for it to work, it enhances your experience.
- ✓ **Humour:** Obviously, there's a time and place to use humour, especially when you're working on someone else. It helps not to take yourself too seriously. By injecting some humour when you're working with someone else you'll find that you achieve a greater rapport with them. In Chapter 5, I share with you some enlightening techniques and phrases I use with clients that can help break down the barriers.
- ✓ **Creativity:** Try thinking of EFT as more of an art than a science and you'll find that being creative with your approach is one way of getting good results. Time and time again people ask me what phrases they should use. I always say this comes with time and practice, but throughout the book I give suggestions to help you along the way. Meanwhile, let your creativity flow.

You use EFT on a problem like this:

1. **Tune into your problem or issue and measure its intensity on a scale between zero and 10, with 10 being the highest.**

For example, say that you're afraid of flying. You travel a lot for work. So perhaps you'd rate this problem as an 8.

2. **Start tapping on certain parts of the body while saying a phrase acknowledging the problem and accepting yourself.**

For example, perhaps you tap on the back of your hand while humming a song, counting from 1 to 5 out loud, and rolling your eyes, humming, and tapping again. You no doubt think that doing all this sounds wacky or like voodoo, but I assure you, it absolutely works.



One of EFT's many attractive qualities is that it's portable enough to be used on someone over the telephone and I work with a lot of my clients this way. If you want to know more, Chapter 17 takes you through the pros and cons and explains how this works in practice.

Remarkably, this healing tool works virtually without negative side effects so there's:

- ✓ No surgery.
- ✓ No needles.
- ✓ No medication.

- ✓ No months or years of therapy.
- ✓ No need to remove clothing.
- ✓ No need for you to revisit or remember all the traumatic event.
- ✓ Certainly no brainwashing.

I can't think of any other therapy that's as quick, safe, gentle, non-invasive, suitable for adults and babies, and even suitable for use on animals and pets. What's more, it's a therapy that you can self-apply.

Finding Help with EFT

It's difficult to measure, but it's estimated that practitioners have used EFT on millions of people for a variety of reasons. Here's a small example of what you can use EFT on:

Phobias	Relationship issues
Fears	Lack of motivation
Insomnia	Blushing
Panic attacks	Effects of chemotherapy
Addictions (smoking, alcohol, food, for example)	Performance
Cravings	Public speaking
Grief	Shyness
Stress	Enuresis (bedwetting)
Anxiety	Habits (nail-biting, hair-pulling, for instance)
Pain	Anger
Trauma and abuse	



Do tell your GP if you're experiencing an improvement in your symptoms as a consequence of EFT. The technique does deserve some credit, after all. The more reports the medical profession receive that EFT works, the more likely they are to either use it on patients or refer them to a qualified practitioner.



No matter how well it works for you, don't use EFT to replace any medication your GP prescribes.

Seeking a Therapist

As with any other therapies, you need to recognise when to seek professional help or advice. This section gives you some guidance in this respect.

Compared to other techniques, EFT is usually quite gentle and you can often achieve substantial relief with little or no pain. Some people's issues, however, are so intense that the mere mention of them causes emotional or physical pain. Although truly serious instances of a severe reaction to a memory such as a panic attack are most likely to occur in seriously emotionally damaged people (approximately less than 1 per cent of the population), beginners of EFT need to employ sensible precautions in this regard and not go where not qualified. I discuss how to handle such reactions in more detail in Chapter 4.



Although EFT produces remarkable clinical results, it's still in the experimental stage and practitioners and the public must take complete responsibility for their use of it. If you want to discuss the use of EFT for a specific emotional or physical problem with a professional in the mental health field, then you need to enquire where these practices are listed. Where appropriate, consult a qualified doctor.

Other occasions when you may need to seek the help or advice of an EFT practitioner are:

- ✓ Overwhelming emotions.
- ✓ Insufficiently trained.
- ✓ Lack of progress.
- ✓ Getting stuck.
- ✓ Childhood abuse cases.
- ✓ Intense trauma.
- ✓ Mental health issues.



If in doubt, seek guidance from a qualified practitioner.

